

What is claimed is:

1. An information processing apparatus which can use content information within a range of usage conditions written in license information, comprising:

storage means for storing first license information;

receiving means for receiving second license information; and

linking means for linking a part or all of said second license information with said first license information,

wherein said content information is used within a range of license information obtained by linking said first license information with said second license information by said linking means.

2. The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said second license information includes license identification information indicative whether said second license information is license information to be overwritten or license information to be added.

3. The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein, if said second license information is found by said license identification information to be

the license information to be overwritten, said linking means writes a part or all of said second license information over said first license information.

4. The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein, if said second license information is found by said license identification information to be the license information to be added, the linking means adds a part or all of said second license information to said first license information.

5. The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, by use of key information unique to said information processing apparatus, an electronic signature is appended to license information obtained by linking said first license information with said second license information by said linking means.

6. The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein, if said first license information and said second license information each include right contents for specifying a period limitation and said second license information is found by said license identification information to be license information to be added, said linking means links said first license information with said second license information by a rule based on said right contents of said first license

information.

7. The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein, if said first license information and said second license information each include right contents for specifying a flag and said second license information is found by said license identification information to be license information to be added, said linking means links said first license information with said second license information by a rule based on said right contents of said first license information.

8. The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein, if said first license information and said second license information each include right contents for specifying a count and said second license information is found by said license identification information to be license information to be added, said linking means links said first license information with said second license information by a rule based on said right contents of said first license information.

9. An information processing method which can use content information within a range of usage conditions written in license information, comprising the steps of:

storing first license information;

receiving second license information;

determining on the basis of license identification information for determining one of overwrite and add attributes whether said second license information received in said receiving step is license information to be overwritten or license information to be added; and

linking a part or all of said second license information with said first license information on the basis of a result of the attribute determination made in said determining step,

wherein said content information is used within a range of license information obtained by linking said first license information with said second license information in said linking step.

10. The information processing method according to claim 9, wherein, if said second license information is found by said license identification information to be license information to be overwritten in said determining step, a part or all of said second license information is written over a part or all of said first license information in said linking step.

11. The information processing method according to claim 9, wherein, if said second license information is found by said license identification information to be

license information to be added in said determining step, a part or all of said second license information is added to said first license information in said linking step.

12. The information processing method according to claim 9, wherein, if said first license information and said second license information each include right contents for specifying a period limitation and said second license information is found by said license identification information to be license information to be added in said determining step, said first license information is linked with said second license information by a rule based on said right contents of said first license information in said linking step.

13. The information processing method according to claim 9, wherein, if said first license information and said second license information each include right contents for specifying a flag and said second license information is found by said license identification information to be license information to be added in said determining step, said first license information is linked with said second license information by a rule based on said right contents of said first license information in said linking step.

14. The information processing method according

to claim 9, wherein, if said first license information and said second license information each include right contents for specifying a count and said second license information is found by said license identification information to be license information to be added in said determining step, said first license information is linked with said second license information by a rule based on said right contents of said first license information in said linking step.

15. An information processing system having storage means for storing first license information, receiving means for receiving second license information, and linking means for linking a part or all of said second license information with said first license information, said information processing system comprising:

a client which uses content information within a range of license information obtained by linking said first license information with said second license information by said linking means; and

a server which sends said second license information to said client on demand thereby through a network.